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Note by the Secretary General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Security Council the fourth quarterly report of the Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), which is submitted in accordance with paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 1284 (1999) of 17 December 1999 (see annex).

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Annex

Fourth quarterly report[a] of the Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission under paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 1284 (1999)

Introduction

1. The present report, which is the fourth submitted in accordance with paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 1284 (1999), covers the activities of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) during the period from 1 December 2000 to 28 February 2001.

2. More than a year has elapsed since the Council adopted resolution 1284 (1999), by which it decided to establish UNMOVIC. Since Iraq has not yet accepted resolution 1284 (1999), the Commission has not been able to commence the operations in Iraq that are mandated by the Council. In the absence of field operations, much preparatory work for such operations has been done and continues, as described in the present report. The establishment of UNMOVIC and making it operative without relying heavily on voluntary contributions of personnel and equipment from Member States means that very considerable efforts, which were previously made by Member States, notably recruitment and training, have had to be made by the Commission. While this has by no means made the active support of States unimportant, for example in the nomination of potential staff and in providing information, it has kept the Commission intensely engaged. However, in the absence of concrete indications of cooperation by Iraq and the commencement of inspections, it has not seemed reasonable, thus far, to proceed with the costly engagements such as helicopter service contracts or the hiring of a large number of personnel, notably for the field.

Issues considered by the College of Commissioners

3. The fourth plenary session of the College of Commissioners was held in Vienna at the Vienna International Centre, from 21 to 22 February 2001. As on previous occasions, in addition to the members of the College, observers from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) attended.

4. A principal issue before the College was a report on ongoing work by UNMOVIC staff to identify "unresolved disarmament issues", which are to be addressed by the Commission, as prescribed in paragraph 2 of Security Council resolution 1284 (1999). The inventory, which will relate to the disarmament requirements set out in section C of resolution 687 (1991), will be of use to the Commission both as a basis for its identification of "key remaining disarmament tasks" to be presented to the Security Council as part of the programme of work (resolution 1284 (1999) para. 7) and for its own understanding of issues which need, more broadly, to be clarified and addressed under the reinforced system of ongoing monitoring and verification in Iraq called for by the Council. Although the inventory must remain provisional until the necessary re-baselining is carried out in Iraq, the Chairman presented to the College the approach and method that UNMOVIC is using in drawing up the inventory. Selected examples of unresolved disarmament issues in each of the three disciplines for which the Commission is responsible (chemical weapons, biological weapons and proscribed missiles) were presented in order to illustrate the manner of their selection and the methodologies and sources that the Commission's experts had used.

5. The College welcomed the efforts of UNMOVIC's staff and, at the same time, requested that further work be undertaken on unresolved disarmament issues, taking into account the different views expressed during the discussion. In so doing, the significance of the unresolved issues should be addressed and an indication given of how these issues might be resolved.

6. A revision and updating of the lists of dual-use items and material to which the export/import monitoring mechanism, approved by the Security Council in its resolution 1051 (1996), applies has been requested by the Council (see para. 18 below). The College was given a briefing on progress to date on this matter.

7. The College also had before it a draft of the UNMOVIC handbook, central parts of which provide guidance for the conduct of inspections in Iraq. The handbook will set out the rights and duties of UNMOVIC staff in the performance of their functions, in accordance with Security Council resolutions, staff regulations and rules and UNMOVIC procedures. It aims at setting professional standards and procedures, responding to the requirements that flow from the Commission's United Nations identity and its international mission. The College had a preliminary exchange of views on the draft before it and encouraged UNMOVIC staff to continue their work with a view to completing the handbook in time for the start of operations in Iraq.

8. A briefing was provided to Commissioners by UNMOVIC staff on the planned use of overhead imagery in support of its work. The College considered that overhead imagery is a complement to on-site inspections and a fundamental component of the instruments available to UNMOVIC for its work. The College welcomed further exploration by UNMOVIC on how it could benefit in the future from the increasing availability of overhead imagery from different sources.

9. Another briefing provided to Commissioners concerned the protection of UNMOVIC information. The College welcomed the work being done by UNMOVIC staff on the protection of UNMOVIC information, balancing the need for security and transparency.

10. In accordance with paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 1284 (1999), the College of Commissioners was consulted on the contents of the present report.

11. The College decided to hold its next session in New York on 21 and 22 May 2001.

Briefings and consultations by the Executive Chairman

12. In the period under review, the Executive Chairman continued his practice of providing monthly briefings to the President of the Security Council. In addition, he has visited the capitals of Austria, France, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and has held consultations with representatives of these Governments. While in Europe he also held consultations with representatives of the Governments of Kuwait and Oman. The support expressed by a large number of Member States for the preparatory work of UNMOVIC has been encouraging. The Commission has not participated in the talks between the Secretary-General and the Government of Iraq aimed at a comprehensive dialogue. However, the Executive Chairman has been kept informed about the preparations for and results of the dialogue. He has also had an opportunity to brief the Secretary-General on how UNMOVIC is preparing itself for its work under Security Council resolution 1284 (1999).

Recruitment

13. Recruitment has taken place for most of the positions needed at the present stage of work for the New York-based core staff, which, at the professional level, now comprises 44 persons, of whom 10 are women, from 21 Member States. The number of qualified individuals seeking to serve with UNMOVIC has been gratifying.

Training

14. The third month-long training course conducted by the Commission commenced in Vienna on 19 February and will end on 23 March 2001. Discipline-specific parts of the course have been organized in Austria, Germany and Sweden. Fifty-two persons, encompassing some 24 nationalities, are taking part. Like previous courses, the current training course covers general lectures on the mandate of UNMOVIC, its rights and obligations, the proscribed weapons programmes of Iraq and discipline-specific training. In addition, in conformity with paragraph 6 of resolution 1284 (1999), participants in the course were provided with training regarding the history, religion and culture of Iraq. With the completion of the third training course, UNMOVIC will have a roster of more than 120 persons trained for work in Iraq.

15. The Commission is grateful to the lecturers at the course, who gave their time without fee, and also to the Governments of Austria, Germany and Sweden, which provided facilities and personnel for health and safety training, as well as visits to sites relevant to the study of various weapons disciplines and technologies. The Commission is also indebted to IAEA and its Iraq

Action Team for the valuable support it provided for this course.

16. Preparations are under way for a fourth UNMOVIC training course to be held in May 2001.

17. In view of the time lapse between the training of potential staff and the actual engagement of such staff, the Commission has continued to provide all trainees with a newsletter on developments concerning UNMOVIC. It has also recently established its own Internet web site, which serves the broader purpose of providing extensive information to all individuals interested in UNMOVIC activities, and making relevant and non-confidential UNMOVIC documents available online.

Other activities

18. The staff of the Commission and experts from IAEA have continued to revise and update the lists of dual-use items and material to which the export/import monitoring mechanism, approved by the Security Council in its resolution 1051 (1996), applies. This task was called for in paragraph 8 of resolution 1284 (1999) and a time frame was set by paragraph 19 of resolution 1330 (2000), requiring completion by 5 June 2001. The Commission's experts held consultations with representatives of interested Member States on the suggested revisions to the chemical and biological lists in New York on 13 and 14 February 2001. The results of the consultations were presented to the College of Commissioners at their meeting in Vienna. Similar consultations with governmental experts are being planned for suggested revisions to the missile list.

19. The joint unit established to operate the export/import monitoring mechanism continues to receive notifications from Member States of supplies to Iraq of dual-use items. The Government of Iraq has however not provided its corresponding notifications as required under Security Council resolution 1051 (1996).

20. The Commission continues to explore the potential use of overhead imagery for its work and has been discussing its requirements with some Member States and commercial providers. While imagery cannot be a substitute for on-site inspection, it can provide a valuable complement to inspection. The Commission is also exploring other new technologies with respect to potential sensor equipment to be deployed in Iraq.

Premises

21. To alleviate the overcrowding in the UNMOVIC premises and to allow recruitment to vacant posts, the Commission has been allocated additional office space on the fourth floor of the Secretariat building, pending a planned move of a number of staff to office space in a nearby building in April 2001.

Conclusions

22. It is clear from the foregoing that UNMOVIC continues to prepare itself for full operations. Useful work has been done. The new staff members are gradually becoming familiar with and are examining the vast documentation accumulated by the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM). Much training has been accomplished and guidance has been worked out in many areas. New information is also coming to UNMOVIC from outside sources. UNMOVIC will be able to assess Iraq's compliance with respect to its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions only when the reinforced system of ongoing monitoring and verification is in operation and there is cooperation by Iraq.

Note

* The Commission's three previous quarterly reports were issued as documents S/2000/516, S/2000/835 and S/2000/1134.